



**Pacific Northwest Region
Malheur National Forest**
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www.fs.usda.gov/malheur

News Release

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April 28, 2016

Spring prescribed burning implementation continues on the Malheur

JOHN DAY, PRAIRIE CITY, and HINES, OR – Malheur National Forest fire managers continue to evaluate conditions for conduction spring prescribed burnings across the forest.

As part of the Forest's hazardous fuels reduction program, each of the three districts are preparing for spring landscape prescribed burning in various areas.

Burns will take place over the next several months; exact timing and amount of burning accomplished will be determined by weather, fuels conditions, and forecasted smoke dispersion.

Landscape burning planned for this spring may include the following units:

- Dairy, Emigrant Creek Ranger District
- George, Emigrant Creek Ranger District
- Knox, Prairie City Ranger District
- 16 RD, Prairie City Ranger District
- Crawford Creek, Blue Mountain Ranger District
- Balance, Blue Mountain Ranger District
- Damon, Blue Mountain Ranger District
- 18 RD, Blue Mountain Ranger District



Burning in the Dairy and George Project areas may begin on the Emigrant Creek Ranger District as early as Monday, May 2.

Crews are also evaluating conditions to continue burning in the Damon and Crawford Project areas. The Damon project is located off Forest Road 3925, adjacent to Hwy 395, North of Seneca on the Blue Mountain Ranger District. The Crawford project area is located near the community of Austin, north of the junction of State Highways 26 and 7. These burns may begin as early as Sunday May 1 and continue through the week.

Burning may have some short-term impacts on air quality levels, but any burning activity will be accomplished during weather conditions that should minimize impacts of smoke on local communities.

Prescribed fires are an integral part of land management across the Malheur National Forest. Each of these burns represents many hours of planning and preparation. Specific weather and vegetative conditions must be in place in order to conduct these burns. Prescribed burns are designed to both reduce the risk of catastrophic wildfires as well to restore overall health of the National Forest System lands.



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(continued)

In many areas, prescribed burning is the last of a series of treatments for vegetation management and fuel reduction projects. Burning often follows harvest or other thinning activities that remove some trees while retaining the largest, healthiest trees of the most fire-resistant species, such as ponderosa pine and western larch. Smaller trees (ladder fuels) are removed leaving stands less susceptible to crown fires. Prescribed burning completes the treatment process by consuming much of the accumulated surface fuel. Research continues to show that areas treated with prescribed fire burn much less intensely when wildfire burns through.

Prescribed burning is conducted using federal, state and local agency employees and contracted personnel and equipment. Crews, engines, dozers, and helicopters, typical resources used on a prescribed burn, monitor and maintain the burn within the fireline perimeter.

Areas to be burned are often prepared by constructing a fire line around them and using existing roads and trails as fire breaks. Firing or ignition of the area will be accomplished by ground personnel utilizing drip torches and, on larger projects, by a helicopter mounted firing devices. Each prescribed burn has an organized command structure including a burn boss, firing boss, and a holding boss that provides and implements management of the burn.

Prescribed burning is not without impacts. Managing the smoke produced by prescribed burns is a significant challenge and the hardest to forecast in the implementation planning process. Managers work closely with the Oregon Department of Forestry and the Washington Department of Natural Resource in accordance with their smoke management plans to determine when, where, and how much can be burned on a daily basis. Unfavorable weather conditions, especially those leading to an adverse smoke management forecast, are the primary reason a prescribed burn would be postponed.

Updates and maps will be available online at www.fs.usda.gov/malheur.

For further information, please call or visit one of our Forest Service offices:

- **Supervisor's Office/Blue Mountain Ranger District:** 431 Patterson Bridge Rd, John Day, OR 97845 (541) 575-3000
- **Emigrant Creek Ranger District:** 265 Highway 20 South, Hines, OR 97738 (541) 573-4300
- **Prairie City Ranger District:** 327 SW Front Street, Prairie City, OR 97869 (541) 820-3800

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